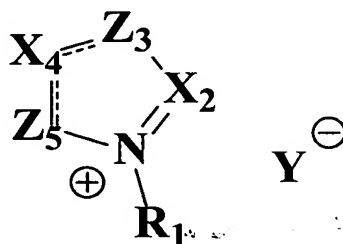


**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A multilayer film comprising a substrate bearing an aligned liquid crystal layer wherein the aligned liquid crystal layer contains an azolium salt represented by formula (I):



**I**

wherein

the subscripts represent the ring positions and each X is independently N or C-R;

each Z is independently N, N-R, C-(R)(R), O, S, SO<sub>2</sub>, SO, C=O, C=S, or C=NR;

each R group is independently hydrogen or a substituent; and

Y is a charge balancing anion, which may be a separate moiety or part of an X, Z, or R;

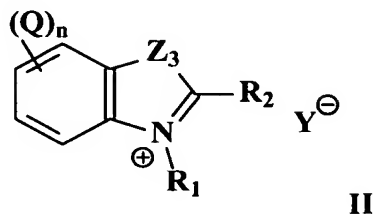
provided two or more X, Z and R groups may form a ring;

provided the salt may be part of an oligomer or polymer..

2. The film of claim 1 wherein each X is C-R.
3. The film of claim 1 wherein Z<sub>3</sub> is S or N-R.
4. The film of claim 2 wherein Z<sub>3</sub> is S or N-R.
5. The film of claim 2 wherein Z<sub>3</sub> is S.

6. The film of claim 2 wherein  $Z_3$  is N-R.
7. The film of claim 1 wherein  $X_2$  is C- $R_2$  wherein  $R_2$  is H or a methyl group.
8. The film of claim 1 wherein  $X_4$  and  $Z_5$  join to form a ring.
9. The film of claim 1 wherein the ring is a phenyl ring.
10. The film of claim 1 wherein the ring is a cyclohexenyl ring.
11. The film of claim 1 wherein  $X_4$  and  $Z_5$  are both C-R groups.
12. The film of claim 11 wherein both  $R_4$  and  $R_5$  are H, alkyl, alkoxy, or aryl groups.
13. The film of claim 1 wherein the compound of formula (I) is a bis compound joined at the 1 position.
14. The film of claim 1 wherein Y is an anion selected from the group consisting of  $BF_4$ ,  $PF_6$ ,  $CF_3CO_2$ , Br, Cl, COO,  $SO_3$ , and  $CH_3SO_3$ .
15. The film of claim 1 wherein the azolium salt is present in an amount of at least 0.1 wt% of the layer.
16. The film of claim 1 wherein the azolium salt is present in an amount of at least 0.1-10 wt% of the layer.
17. The film of claim 1 wherein the azolium salt is present in an amount of at least 0.25-5 wt% of the layer.

18. The film of claim 1 wherein the azolium salt is a benzazolium represented by formula (II):



wherein

the subscripts represent the ring positions;

$Z_3$  is N, N-R, C-(R)(R), O, S,  $SO_2$ , SO, C=O, C=S, or C=NR;

each R group is independently hydrogen or a substituent;

Y is a charge balancing anion, which may be a separate moiety or part of the azolium; and

each Q independently represents a substituent and n is an integer from 0 to 4.

19. The film of claim 18 wherein, Z is N-R, O, or S where R is H or a substituent.

20. The film of claim 18 wherein the azolium salt is present in an amount of at least 0.1 wt% of the layer.

21. The film of claim 18 wherein the azolium salt is present in an amount of at least 0.1-10 wt% of the layer.

22. The film of claim 18 wherein the azolium salt is present in an amount of at least 0.25-5 wt% of the layer.

23. A process for imparting an increased tilt angle to a polymeric liquid crystal layer upon curing comprising including in that layer an azolium salt compound according to claim 1 prior to curing.

24. A process for imparting an increased tilt angle to a polymeric liquid crystal layer upon curing comprising including in that layer an azolium salt compound according to claim 18 prior to curing.